

for younger, for minorities of both sexes compared to whites, and for males of both races compared to females. Minority male rates are especially high. Major exceptions are the higher suicide and motor vehicle rates among whites aged 15-19. Most remarkable are the racial disparities in homicide rates; at ages 15-19, the homicide rate for minority males is nearly **13 times** the rate for white males.

Concerning "other injuries," leading causes in 1992 were "conflagration (fire) in private dwelling" among decedents aged 10-14 and "accidental drowning and submersion" among decedents aged 15-19. Altogether, 13 adolescents drowned in 1992; all were male.

Due to the relatively small number of adolescent deaths, county-specific death data are not provided here. However, death counts by cause, age, and race-sex are available in the annual report, **Detailed Mortality Statistics**. Produced on microfiche, the county reports are available in county health departments or by request to the State Center.

Among the Year 2000 health objectives for the nation,⁷ the only mortality objective targeting teenagers exclusively is to reduce suicide at ages 15-19 to a rate of 8.2 per hundred thousand persons (Objective 6.1a). The North Carolina rate was 10.7 in 1992.

Other mortality objectives target adolescents and young adults collectively. These call for the reduction of homicide among several subpopulations aged 15-34 and the reduction of total and alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities at ages 15-24. See Objectives 4.1b, 7.1, and 9.3b of Appendix 1.

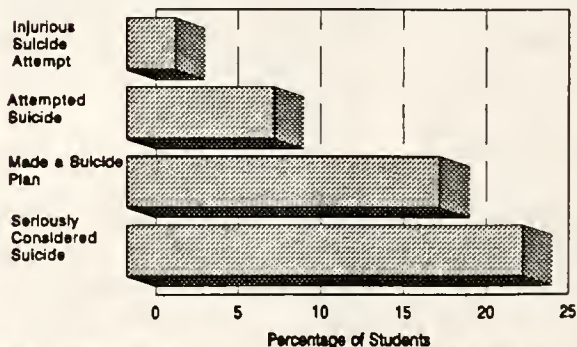
High-Risk Behaviors

Motor Vehicle Injuries—The 1993 Youth Risk Behavior Survey⁸ revealed the following about North Carolina high school students' behavior related to motor vehicles:

- Only 39 percent of students said they *always* wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else. The U.S. objective for all occupants of motor vehicles is at least 85 percent.
- Only 40 percent of motorcyclists said they *always* used a helmet when cycling during the past year. The U.S. objective for all ages is at least 80 percent.
- During the past month, one-third of students rode with a driver who had been drinking; nearly one-fifth of males reported drinking and driving themselves.

Suicide—In 1993, three percent of high school students in North Carolina reported an "injurious" suicide attempt during the past year, meaning the attempt resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse. But many more said they had during the past year attempted suicide (9%), made a suicide plan (19%), or seriously considered suicide (24%) (see Figure 3). Females and younger students were most likely to report these suicidal thoughts or attempts; blacks were less likely than whites and other races. The related national objective is to reduce by 15 percent (to 1.8%) the incidence of injurious suicide attempts among adolescents aged 14 through 17 (Objective 6.2).

FIGURE 3
Percentage of High School Students Reporting Suicidal Thoughts or Attempts During Last 12 Months
North Carolina 1993



Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, N.C. Department of Public Instruction, March 1993.